

on activities to meet the needs of their members. He spoke of defining the interest of Groups and of planning programs of general interest to all members. He mentioned various devices, such as section formation to meet highly specialized interests, diversified program planning to meet all interests, project selection to gain full membership participation, the giving of assistants as well as chief librarians a share in programs, the reading of minutes of previous meetings in order to remind members of what has happened, and the need for spending sufficient time on problems or projects. He discussed the need for Chapter and Group members to be aware of Association problems, and for individual Groups to adapt the successful techniques of other Groups. He cited a few projects which had been particularly useful to a large number of people over a period of time. He referred to meetings of new members which had been conducted very successfully at various times under the title of "Junior Confer-

ence Group."

Mr. Fagerhaug also discussed the difficulties of conducting Group programs when Group rolls consist of persons who are not only inactive in Group affairs, but are also so disinterested that less than one fourth actually subscribe to the subscription bulletins, as shown in at least three Groups' figures. Group members, he felt, should project their activities as nearly as possible across Group lines in order to eliminate as much as possible Group memberships. He concluded his talk by stressing that the Group's program must meet the needs of its members if the Group is to continue functioning successfully as a Group, and if it is to prevent development of disgruntled segments of membership making application to form new Groups.

Miss Ruth Savord, author of the thought-provoking article "Seen From the Sidelines", which appeared in the May-June issue of **SPECIAL LIBRARIES**, then presented the paper which follows:

STRUCTURE AND INTERRELATIONS OF SLA GROUPS

By RUTH SAVORD

Librarian, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, N. Y.

WE in SLA are at the crossroads and must put our best thought and effort into deciding which road we are going to take. We can follow the path of least resistance, which will mean that our Groups will continue to have a loose organization with a few interested members doing all or most of the work, and that we will carry on our rolls a lot of dead wood, with resulting dissatisfaction, criticism, inefficiency, little professional achievement and eventual disintegration into more and more Groups.

The other path requires that we face the problem squarely here and now—not as an isolated issue but as one phase of Association policy. To do that, each member must make it his business to study, consider and understand Association, Group and Chapter structure and the interrelation of the three so that membership in the *Association*, as contrasted with membership in a *Group* or *Chapter*, can be given real significance. Only through realization of such significance can we then appreciate the meaning and importance of the smaller

grouping. It is only through such unity that we, as an important branch of the library profession, can hope to play our rightful part in advancing our own branch and, thereby, the profession as a whole.

All too often we, as individuals, have a tendency to think that *our* job is the most demanding, that *our* interest in a particular Group or Chapter or project is all-important, thereby failing to see the overall picture of special librarianship which we present to the world.

The Association with its Groups and Chapters is—and can only be—the sum total of its individual members—their interests and their achievements. We can double our numbers and yet be only half as efficient. Growth in numbers only means more complex membership relations and Association administration. Every member added means additional cost of administration. Unless that member is going to contribute to the good of the Association and of the profession, he is no asset.

Miss Rogers has outlined the somewhat Topsy-like development of our Groups while Mr. Fagerhaug has given an able presentation of what the Groups can mean to the individual and methods of reaching the individual. I would like to inject one comment on that subject. It seems to me that Group-individual relations must be a two-way process. Why shouldn't an interested member seek out the Group and offer his co-operation instead of just sitting back and waiting for the Group to seek him out? One should remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive. We each get value from Association affiliation in direct ratio to our own contribution. If we sit back and fold our hands and think "let someone else do the work," we are apt to end up as nothing but a name on a list—giving and getting exactly nothing. Incidentally, these people often are the ones who are first to criticize what's being done, how it's being done and by whom. So offer

your services, take *your* share of responsibility and see what a vital part of your life the Association can become. Think what 5,000 *working* members could accomplish.

As I said earlier, I think we are at the crossroads, and before we choose the path we are going to take, we must first take stock of where we are.

Many members have claimed that, to them, Groups are all-important. Whenever, I hear this comment, I am impelled to question "What Group?" If a member is enrolled in two or three Groups as so many are, can all of them be of equal importance? Again, when the statement comes from a member in one of our larger Chapters where local Groups are active, I often find that these members are scarcely conscious of national Groups. The existence of such provincialism must be laid at the doors of the Chapter administration which should be constantly on the alert to educate and to inform Chapter members on national problems and to instill a national viewpoint, since this is the first and sometimes the only contact of members with national activities. In any case, these local Groups are a Chapter problem and not within the scope of our discussion except in so far as they can be utilized in the promotion of understanding of national problems and for developing leadership for national Groups. But to go back to the statement that Groups are all-important, I heartily disagree with such an attitude because, as I have tried to explain, I think no activity can be really significant unless membership in the Association as a whole is significant. Groups are important only in so far as they help members and, thereby, the Association.

GROUP DUPLICATION

At present our Groups overlap in their interest. In some cases, they represent duplication of effort and of membership, thus causing unwieldy bodies that cannot possibly be admin-

istered efficiently by volunteer workers.

Our Groups were never clearly defined because, in the beginning, they were simply the coming together of people of like interests. One Group under weak leadership and without any very definite plans or projects before it, died or became inactive. On the other hand, one with aggressive leadership, working on a vital project, suddenly became very strong, grew and prospered. As new members joined and brought in libraries in fields not heretofore represented by Groups, new Groups were set up in accordance with the Constitution. As a small, closely-knit organization, this rather informal and unplanned process served. In an organization of the size to which we have grown, we must look at the whole field, and then subdivide into Groups which represent the fields within which our specialists can function with mutual satisfaction.

We now have 14 Groups, at least six of which are form Groups, while the others are subject Groups. Interest from both points of view is one of the factors which accounts for the desire of members to belong to more than one Group, thus putting such heavy burdens on volunteer Group officers. As I see it, our first problem, then, is: Shall our Groups represent subject interest or shall they represent functional interest? We must decide whether the administrators and workers in a library devoted to art, business, finance, aviation, medicine, international relations have sufficient problems in common to justify the organization of groups in those subject fields. If not, what is the alternative?

Serving as I do in an association library, I feel that I have more problems connected with the clientele I serve than with material in the field. I also am of the opinion that librarians of banks have more in common with librarians of other banks than they do with librarians in business corporations, even though these latter are dealing with financial material. I am sure that mu-

seum librarians, whether they are handling art material, historical material or material in the natural sciences, have more in common with each other than with those in the art, history or natural sciences departments of a university.

FORM GROUPS VS. SUBJECT GROUPS

My solution is to change to form Groups for the whole Association. The membership might then fall into groupings something like this: Association, Bank, Corporation, Departmental (including Public & University), Governmental, Institutional, Museum, Newspaper and Publishing, and Service Organizations. Wherever necessary, these would be further divided into Sections according to subject interest. To many, this will sound extremely drastic and I have no doubt that it will meet with considerable opposition. May I say, however, that I have given it a great deal of thought and I ask for the same amount of thought and consideration from you before you condemn it wholeheartedly. I say we have to face the problem, so let's face it in a spirit of fairness and open-mindedness.

One fact that led me to the conclusion that *form* and not *subject* division is our answer is that, if we abolish form Groups entirely, many of our members will be left without any affiliation. Newspaper, Publishing, Museum, and Hospital are not subject Groups. Members of the Hospital Group might fit into either Biological Sciences or Science-Technology, but libraries in the Newspaper and Publishing Groups are not confined to any subject. Insurance and Advertising, I am sure, consider themselves subject Groups—but are they? My experience with advertising libraries is that material on advertising is the least of one's trouble, and I have been told that that is also true of insurance libraries. Where, then, are their subject problems? Libraries in the University and College Group—which, incidentally, is a misnomer for any Group in so far as special libraries are con-

cerned—have problems arising from their departmental status which are not unlike those of public library departmental problems. Both could fit into subject Groups, as could Museum libraries.

I also think these form Groups would mean more in their connotations to the outside world and, in fact, to our employers. Corporations would understand a designation of a Corporation Group and might well feel that their librarian could get assistance from other corporation librarians when they might not understand what assistance they could obtain from another financial or scientific librarian. In other words, we would be talking the language of our employers.

The form Groups which I have suggested are the ones that, to me, seem to fit our present membership, but please understand that there is nothing final about them—they are only *my* suggested break-down. The point to be discussed is—what policy should we adopt—form or subject? Whether we like it or not, the time has come when we must decide.

If we decide, after due consideration, that the form division is not acceptable, then the next step is to attempt a tightening up of the present subject set-up, combining those most closely allied into a single Group with Section subdivision. For instance, we now have changed our former Public Business Librarians Group to the Business Group. Since so large a part of our membership falls into the category of Business, just where are we to draw the line? Certainly, Advertising, Finance, Insurance, Transportation all logically come under Business. Then why shouldn't these be Sections under a Business Group, each gaining strength from the other? One suggestion for such a consolidation has been made. It is this:

BUSINESS GROUP

Advertising	} Sections
Business Economics	
Finance	
Insurance	
Transportation	

GEOGRAPHY & MAP GROUP

MUSEUM GROUP

Art Museums	} Sections
Science Museums	
Historical Societies	

PRINTING & PUBLISHING GROUP

Newspaper	} Sections
Periodicals and Books	

SCIENCE-TECHNOLOGY GROUP

Biological Sciences	} Sections
Chemistry	
Hospital or Medical	
Petroleum	
Pharmaceutical	

SOCIAL SCIENCES GROUP

Social Services	} Sections
Political Science	
Economic Theory	

This would give us six large Groups and would cut down form Groups to two. Arrangements for convention meetings would be greatly simplified; overall interests could be centered in the large Group with specific interests in the Sections. Available funds divided among six Groups would allow enough for some apportionment to Sections.

Need for decision is becoming more and more acute because of the growing tendencies toward the formation of more and more new Groups. Our Constitution allows the Executive Board to authorize the formation of new Groups on petition of 10 or more members. The catch is that the portion of the article which says "*Groups* relating to definite interests" seems to have been interpreted very broadly, or maybe it has been interpreted very narrowly, depending on how you define "definite." It all goes back to the *indefiniteness* of our Group structure. Most of the new Groups which have been formed lately are so nearly allied to already existing Groups that they add to the confusion of overlapping interests, take strength from the original Group and themselves prove weak. Moreover, a petition of 10 members out of a membership of 5,000 is too small a representation. In revising the Constitution, I hope that this will be changed, and I would also recommend that prospective Groups should

be put on a trial basis of at least one year to give them a chance to prove their worth and to give the Association a chance to judge their necessity.

GROUP ORGANIZATION

Having agreed on either form or subject Group structure and on stricter provisions for new Groups, we must then ask each Group to set up a more stable organization: first, to define in more or less specific terms the limits of its field, to draft a simple Constitution and By-Laws, to provide for continuity of administration in that Constitution, and to take responsibility for the maintenance of creditable standards of professional leadership and professional work—creditable to themselves and to the Association. In other words, Groups cannot work in a vacuum but must be, at all times, aware that any work they do, any publications they issue or sponsor, any meeting or exhibit conducted by them reflects on their standing, on the standing of the Association and on the standing of the profession. Such controls would aim to prevent dissipation of effort and to ensure a closely-knit grouping within Association structure.

Having reorganized Group set-ups and provided for more continuity and responsibility, have we solved the problem of large memberships in individual Groups? I think not, and I doubt if we ever will until we change the Constitution in regard to Group privileges and membership standards. Although I included this suggestion in some detail in my previous article,¹ I feel it is important enough to repeat here. In fact, I feel that it is basic to everything else.

The number of library associations seems to be ever on the increase and, therefore, there is a professional home for practically every librarian no matter what phase of the profession claims his interest. I object to our encroaching on other associations. It weakens us as well as the association to which these

people rightly belong. It weakens us because, in most cases, these members are not free to take an active part because of their other interests and in many cases, are not qualified to do so. Inevitably, they become names on a list or on several lists.

My suggestion is that we differentiate by means of classes of membership between those who are actively engaged in special libraries and those working in other types of libraries who are interested secondarily, or perhaps only casually, in Special Libraries Association; and further, that we differentiate within these classes as to Group privileges. We not only have the right to do this but it is a necessity if we are to maintain adequate professional standards. Although decision on such changes rests with the Executive Board and the membership at large and does not come within the province of this discussion, Groups might well consider their implications and report their reactions to the Executive Board as a basis for decision. I feel that these changes would represent a real step forward.

GROUP FINANCING

In every field of endeavor financial considerations inevitably place limitations on plans and programs. Groups have been clamoring for larger allotments. Why? For what is the money to be used?

Let us suppose a Group in the coming year is not involved in any large project but is more or less concerned with keeping the Group informed between Conventions, possibly discussing or planning a project for next year. What is needed—postage for communications, possibly some mimeographing or some similar administrative expense? What great hardship is involved in sending to the Finance Committee an estimate of how much will be needed? Then, let us suppose that in another Group, a project is under way. This Group then sends in an estimate for ad-

¹ SPECIAL LIBRARIES, May-June 1948, p.152.

ministration expense plus an estimate on expense of the project. Is not this sound business practice?

Somewhere, somehow, there has grown up an accepted allotment of 15¢ per Group member which is, to say the least, an evasion of the Constitution. It stands to reason that a Group which has more than 1,500 members will need more for administration expense than a Group of 150 members.

I have yet to hear of any Group involved in a project of national import being refused funds. The trouble is that, when we speak of projects, we sometimes lose sight of the fact that a "project" is usually understood to be an undertaking which has a foreseeable end — therefore, a continuing, current publication cannot be considered as a project. The Advertising Group's *What's New* is such an undertaking, primarily of interest to Advertising Group members and a large outside clientele. If it is of value to that clientele, they and not the Association should subsidize it. This is also true of *Insurance Book Reviews*. We cannot subsidize one without subsidizing the other.

Group Bulletins, likewise, should be on a subscription basis. If they are not worth paying for, they probably are not worth the effort that goes into preparing them. The experience of the Financial Group is a case in point. Their Bulletin is one of the best that is issued. It contains in almost every issue articles which would interest the entire membership. Yet, out of a membership of 479 in the Group, there were exactly 99 members who wanted the Bulletin enough to pay for it. Might not the interested members who devote so much time and effort to compiling this Bulletin be better occupied in working on a project that would interest more people? This is a question not a criticism.

I do not have any figures on the subscriptions in other Groups which make a charge for their Bulletins, but these facts and the further fact that just 90

out of a membership of almost 5,000 cared enough for an extra Group affiliation to pay an additional 50¢ for it seem to me to point to a lack of interest in Group activities rather than to any need for increased funds.

I feel that this matter of Group financing is a bug-a-boo which has somehow arisen to bedevil us all and which has been gaining momentum through over-repetition with little thought and less fact to support it. In other words, has not most of the argument and complaint on Group financing arisen through a somewhat false pride in Group activity rather than from a consideration of accomplishment as a result of financing. If we are going to make the best use of available funds so that they may bring the most benefit to the most members, we have no choice but to continue our present system of appropriation based on estimated costs of specific projects. Under a system of automatic allotments, all Groups, regardless of activity, would be granted the same percentage and these funds would either be dissipated in unimportant activities or would lay dormant in the treasury of one Group, when they might have been allotted to another Group working on a vital project.

However, no matter how much agreement or disagreement there may be on these points, I feel that this phase of the problem cannot be solved until we reorganize our Group structure according to whatever plan is agreed upon, limit our membership in Groups to active special librarians and determine the scope and aim of each Group. In making a decision on financing, we must remember to look at the whole financial picture of the Association, to consider the demands made on it and then the relative value of Group financing to the whole structure.

GROUP COOPERATION

The problems of inter-group relations are not clearly so complicated nor so controversial. They are largely a matter

of cooperation, of keeping informed and of remembering that each Group cannot be a law unto itself, but must be one link in a chain which binds us all together.

The most vital factor in these relationships is our Group Liaison Officer and Group Relations Chairman, who serves as a clearing house of Group activities and in an advisory capacity. But here again, cooperation must be a two-way process. If you have read the excellent *Group Manual* prepared by this Committee, you found almost three pages devoted to the duties of the Group Liaison Officer and the Group Relations Committee. However, there is scarcely one of these duties that can be carried out unless Group Officers provide information on proposed Group projects and on Group problems, send reports and bulletins, and in every way, keep both the Group Liaison Officer and the Group Relations Committee informed.

If each Group does its share in this way, then the Group Liaison Officer and the Committee can advise, and inform all Groups of what others are doing and can bring to the attention of the Executive Board problems that need its attention. With our present overlapping of interests, this interchange of information about other Groups is all-important if we are to avoid duplication of effort. All projects that are being considered should be cleared through the Group Liaison Officer who is thereby able to advise in the light of his knowledge of activities proposed in other Groups.

There is room for more active cooperation between Groups on vital objectives. During the war, we made such a concerted effort in our survey of what we could contribute to the national defense. Surely there are other needs of the profession to which all Groups could devote their efforts, i.e., recruiting and standards and methods, which are problems common to the profession, yet which differ among Groups.

If we are not to become narrow and isolated in our viewpoints, we must know each other, understand each other's problems. Joint meetings at Conventions are helpful for this purpose, and, certainly, with the exception of business meetings, Group meetings should be open to all. Group chairmen or their representatives should feel a responsibility to attend Advisory Council meetings and should pass on to their members through Group Bulletins or Chairman's letter, information gathered there.

In 1940, we had a Committee to report on Group structure and activities; in 1943, Miss Cole circularized a great many individuals as to their membership in Groups—especially in more than one Group—and the former Committee of Five, now the Committee on Organization and Procedure is devoting its best efforts to a study of the problem. So far none of these efforts have been fruitful. I feel that it would be in order for every Group member to devote all thought and effort in the coming year to discussing these problems. We cannot change our Constitution this year and we must not upset current procedure in a hasty manner. However, as the above-mentioned surveys indicate, the problem has been with us for a long time and we have done nothing to solve it. Thorough consideration by all members and much careful study of membership interests and desires must precede any decision. A year devoted to this discussion in a spirit of open-mindedness and thought for the good of the Association and the profession would be a year well-spent.

These are the policy decisions which must be made:

1. Shall we differentiate in our classes of membership between those actively engaged in special libraries and those with a secondary interest?
2. If we do, shall we likewise limit Group privileges?
3. Shall we reorganize our Groups on a form basis or on a more closely-knit subject basis?

4. What provisions shall be made for the organization of new Groups?
5. How shall we finance our Groups without hampering our other activities?

DISCUSSION

The discussion among attending members revolved around such points as: difficulties in learning the specialties of members on Group lists; SLA responsibility toward librarians whose main interest is covered by another library organization; the need for defining Group membership as a *privilege*, to be taken only by those persons vitally interested in a Group and willing to work with it. The general discussion indicated that subject Groups are more satisfactory than form groups. Over and over again the questions of secondary affiliations represented on Group membership rolls, and public librarian members who remain relatively inactive were brought up. It was stressed that special librarianship is all things to all people, and that we must define its

philosophy in the Association before we go further into Group definitions.

The meeting was broken by insertion of a brief discussion by Robert Christ, Public Relations Chairman, on the relative values of publicity on an Association level as against a Group level. General concurrence seemed to be that public relations should be at the Association rather than the Group level.

There was some general criticism in the lack of time in Convention for diversified Group meetings. Paul Gay stated that he felt we were allowing the Association to broaden too much, and that some Groups were not willing to face this problem. Graded membership was suggested. Miss Savord mentioned the fallacy of 5400 names on the membership rolls with 1100 unpaid members. Working or active members were discussed in relation to non-working or inactive members. One suggestion which was acclaimed by all present, was that Conventions be made better working conferences in which library business was discussed and there were fewer speeches from outsiders.

THE FOUNTAIN REPORT — A RESUME¹

AT the SLA Board meeting of June 13, 1947, the Committee on Organizational Structures and Policies (appointed the Committee of Five in 1946) recommended that there be made a "survey of office procedure at Headquarters plus a review of the present job analysis for employes." This was to serve as a "basis for Association" and as a "guide . . . in determining salaries, salary increases, sick leave, vacation policies, etc." This study was to be carried out, if possible, by a professional consultant. In other words, this study was to analyze the service to members, to try to streamline some of the routines in the office, and to avoid duplication of effort.

As a result of Board action, Mr. H. A. Fountain, Management Controls Consultant, was requested to undertake this survey and to report his findings, together with such recommendations as he believed would be beneficial, to the Association. Mr. Fountain spent consid-

erable time and effort on this study. In order to understand the purposes of SLA, its scheme of organization, its policies, and other problems, Mr. Fountain reviewed the Constitution, By-laws and Minutes of meetings for the past several years. To gain background information, Mr. Fountain talked with a number of former presidents, board members, Chapter officers, group Chairmen and members of the Association, as well as with Mrs. Stebbins, the Executive Secretary.

In the introduction to his report, Mr. Fountain reviews the growth of SLA, the increased demands upon Headquarters, the classes of membership and numbers in each class with potential Group affiliations, and some of the Secretary's responsibilities.

The first part of his report deals with personnel policies of professional associations in New York City and shows that SLA's salary scale is in line with them and that other policies regarding vacations, holidays, etc. fall within average practices.

¹ Copies of the complete report may be borrowed from SLA Headquarters.